

Questions We Have Received from BPOL Associates

At the library and postal conferences and on the BPOL Hotline we hear a wide variety of questions from you about the BPOL Program. Here are just a few received last filing season:

Q. We order the basic 1040 forms and instructions each year. I often get requests from my customers for other tax forms as well. Can I order additional tax forms?

A. Yes, all BPOL associates can order additional tax materials. Because local circumstances and demand vary in different parts of the country, we often get requests from BPOL participants for additional products. Feedback from many post offices and libraries over the past couple of years prompted us to make more than 100 tax products available to all BPOL participants last year. To make it easier to order additional materials, we now send a complete order blank to all BPOL locations. Your "BPOL Order Blank for Federal Income Tax Forms" (Form 8635) is included in this mailing. If you want other products in addition to the basic Form 1040 series to meet your customers' needs, please enter the quantity needed in the corresponding box and we will ship them to you next filing season, as they become available.

Q. I ordered the basic forms and instructions last year to make available to my customers. I received the forms January 14th but didn't receive the instructions until January 20th. Why don't they come at the same time? I was concerned that if my order for the instructions wouldn't come so I called the BPOL Hotline.

A. Each tax-filing season IRS produces and ships millions of copies of tax forms and instructions to more than 42,000 BPOL locations. Because such large quantities are printed, we rely on many print

contractors located throughout the country to accomplish this huge task. It is not unusual for several printers to print forms while many others are printing the instructions. Consequently, forms and instructions do not always ship at the same time or from the same location so they often arrive anywhere from a few days to a week apart. Shipping information is available on the BPOL Web page of the IRS Digital Daily Web site from October through April, http://www.irs.gov/forms_pubs/bpol or by calling the BPOL Hotline at 1-800-829-2765.

Q. In preparation for the tax filing season, we usually put together an information listing containing IRS telephone numbers because we get so many questions from our customers about how to contact IRS. Is there anything available from IRS with this information that we can use instead?

A. IRS has several products that provide IRS contact information. Publication 3201, *IRS Tax Information* is a bookmark listing IRS taxpayer assistance telephone numbers. It is a tear-off bookmark issued in pads of 50. When customers ask you for tax help or information, give them a bookmark to refer them to IRS for assistance. Publication 2053, *Quick and Easy Access to IRS Tax Help and Forms*, also identifies various options available to taxpayers for getting tax forms and assistance. A four page publication, it can be ordered in large quantities and displayed with the other tax products you offer for taxpayers to pick up. Publications 3201 and 2053 are included on the enclosed "BPOL Order Blank for Federal Tax Forms". If you want to order a supply, enter the quantity needed in the corresponding box on the order blank. Information can always be found on the IRS Web site, The Digital Daily, at www.irs.gov

HOW TO REACH US

Have BPOL related questions? We are here to help. Please contact us.

BPOL Hotline: 1-800-829-2765 Monday-Friday 7 a.m. - 8 p.m./Saturday 9 a.m.-7 p.m.

Write to us at: Internal Revenue Service

BPOL Program
P.O. Box 8906
Bloomington, IL 61702-9881



Department of the Treasury
Internal Revenue Service

www.irs.gov

Publication 3404 (5-00)
Catalog Number 280061

Commissioner Rossotti Extends Thanks to ALA and USPS

HIGHLIGHTS

In this issue
you will find:

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Working Together

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Collaborate on
Small Business
Resource Guide


■ TAXi

■ Library and
Postal Conferences
and more!

Commissioner of Internal Revenue, Charles O. Rossotti, sent letters to William Henderson, Postmaster General, United States Postal Service, and Sarah A. Long, President, American Library Association, to express his appreciation for the outstanding efforts of both organizations during this tax filing season. Each year more than 40,000 post offices and libraries across the country distribute federal tax forms and publications at their locations. "Post offices and libraries offering tax materials are providing an exceptional public

service for their patrons," he said, "and a tremendous help to IRS, enabling us to ensure citizens have access to tax materials in their communities." "Many libraries and post offices offered extended hours on 'Tax Day' to make sure last minute filers got their returns in the mail by midnight." "Customer Service is a key part of both our organizations, and these events are a perfect example of government and communities working together to help local citizens," Rossotti said.

Electronic Opportunities



IRS saw record numbers of electronic transactions this filing season, including returns filed, refunds, payments, and contacts. "When you add up all the numbers, the result is clear—we had a very successful filing season," said IRS Commissioner Charles O. Rossotti. "People are increasingly eager to use computers to prepare and file their taxes." As of April 14, 2000, IRS had received 88.2 million tax returns including more than 32.6 million that were electronically filed.

Total electronic filing is up 15% over the same time period for 1999.

Taxpayers have made the IRS Web site, *The Digital Daily*, www.irs.gov one of the most frequently visited locations on the Internet. Through April 17, 2000, the site had 968 million hits, a 26% increase over last filing season. More than 150 million hits came in the final week before the filing deadline. Taxpayers are accessing the Web site more and more to search for tax information and to download and print tax materials. Our thanks to the United States Postal Service and an untold number of libraries for providing links to *The Digital Daily* from their Web sites.

Outstanding Public Service Contribution

The Internal Revenue Service employees responsible for the Volunteer and Education Programs wish to say **"Thank You"** to each Organization that hosted the following programs:

- Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA)
- Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE)
- Small Business Self-Employed Tax (STEP)
- Community Outreach Tax Education
- Student Tax Clinic
- Practitioner Education
- Low-Income Taxpayer Clinics

■ Government and Community Working Together



For more than 20 years libraries and post offices have partnered with IRS to ensure that taxpayers have ready access to federal tax materials during the filing season. In our efforts to relieve libraries and post offices of so much demand for these materials each year, we have undertaken a number of new initiatives to provide taxpayers with more options to obtain the tax products they need.

The **Corporate Partnership Program** enlists businesses to help IRS make tax materials available in the workplace. We give participating businesses a free copy of the *Tax Products CD-ROM* and *Reproducible Federal Tax Forms*. The employer then gives employees access to the tax materials via

their intranet or LAN. Employees who do not have electronic access can use the reproducibles to photocopy the forms they need. Businesses with 100 or more employees are eligible to join the program. Total nationwide enrollment in the program is currently 2,375 companies reaching nearly 15.5 million employees.

The **Community Based Outlet Program** takes a different approach by supplying credit unions, copy centers, grocery stores, and other local community businesses with reproducible tax materials for their customer's use. There is often a nominal charge associated with making photocopies at these locations. Nationally there are nearly 8,000 businesses enrolled in this program.

■ IRS and Small Business Administration Collaborate on Small Business Resource Guide

Small Business Resource Guide – CD 2000, (Publication 3207) is now available. This new version of the *Resource Guide*, developed by IRS and SBA, is intended to be a one-stop source of easy to access federal tax and other regulatory information. The CD provides information essential to small business owners from a variety of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and educational institutions.

Topics covered include:

- developing a business plan
- finding financing for a small or startup business
- government regulations
- selling a small business
- business alerts and tutorials
- business tax forms and publications

Designed as a “stand-alone” product, the value of the CD is greatly enhanced for those with Internet access. Internet access will enable the user to subscribe to a multi-agency e-mail newsletter, link to hundreds of government agency and non-profit Web sites that provide important information for small businesses, link to *The Digital Daily* for updates to the *Resource Guide CD*, and more.

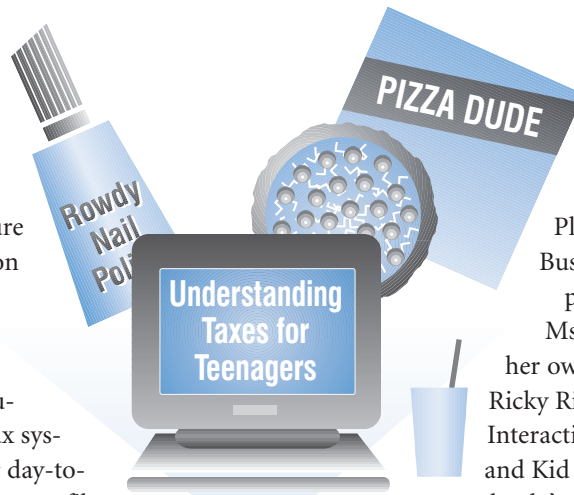
A single, free copy of Publication 3207, *Small Business Resource Guide – CD 2000* can now be ordered on line from IRS by going to: www.irs.gov/bus_info/sm_bus or by calling 1-800-829-3676.

TAXi

TAXi, a joint educational venture between The Section of Taxation of the American Bar Association and Internal Revenue Service, is an interactive program designed to educate teenagers about the U.S. tax system, the effect of taxes on their day-to-day lives, and new electronic ways to file tax returns. This could be a valuable resource for middle and high school students researching government and taxes at the library.

Presented in a fun and “groovy” format, teens learn from Pizza Dude, a pizza delivery guy, and Music Girl, a music store clerk, how federal, state, and local taxes affect their paychecks. Miss Kiki Shmooz, talk show hostess of the hot new talk show, “The Real

Planet,” talks to “Teens in Business for Themselves.” Her panel of guests includes Ms. Sara Strong who started her own Rowdy Nail Polish, Mr. Ricky Rightnow who started Blast Interactive, a Web design business, and Kid Crunch who breaks down the do’s and don’ts for a successful business adventure. The Mayor, The Governor, and The Senator all explain the sources of local, state, and federal tax revenue and where those tax dollars go. Agent Scullery tells how he filed his taxes electronically in “The Tax Files,” and in “What is Fair? Solving the Case of Fair Tax,” a Private Detective explains regressive, progressive, and proportional taxes. Check it out—it’s fun and it’s educational: www.irs.gov/taxi



Library and Postal Conferences

Representatives of the IRS Bank, Post Office and Library (BPOL) Program, and the Volunteer and Education Programs sponsor an exhibit at several postal and library conferences each year. These conferences provide us the opportunity to meet thousands of librarians and postmasters from across the country and thank them for their individual efforts and continued support of the BPOL, and Volunteer and Education Programs. We are there to provide Program support, products and information, and to answer Program related questions. Please stop by our booth at the next conference to catch up on the latest information or just to say hello!

American Library Association Annual Conference (ALA)

July 8-11, 2000 - exhibits
Chicago, Illinois

National Association of Postmasters of the United States (NAPUS)

August 19-25, 2000 - exhibits
Minneapolis, Minnesota

